

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 30-33 are pending. Claims 1-29 have been canceled. New claims 30-33 have been added. No new matter has been introduced. Applicant respectfully requests an action on the merits.

The accompanying application is a continuation of application serial No. 10/271,270, filed October 15, 2002 ("the '270 divisional application"), now U.S. Patent No. 6,638,207, which is a divisional of application serial No. 09/280,097, filed March 29, 1999 ("the '097 application"), now U.S. Patent No. 6,503,186. In the '097 application, a Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121 was set forth in an Office Action dated March 16, 2000, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for the Examiner's reference. In response to the Restriction Requirement, applicant elected to continue prosecution of claims 1-19 and 23-29 (Group I) and canceled claims 20-22 (Group II).

Subsequently, in an Office Action dated August 16, 2000, a copy of which is enclosed herewith, the Examiner withdrew claim 8, *inter alia*, without consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. In response, the Applicant cancelled claim 8, *inter alia*, in an Amendment filed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.116 on May 24, 2001. A copy of the Rule 116 Amendment is also enclosed herewith for the Examiner's reference. The '097 application eventually issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,503,186.

The '270 divisional application was filed on October 15, 2002 to pursue the patentability of original claims 20-22. A Notice of Allowance was mailed on June 2, 2003, and the issue and publication fees were paid on August 28, 2003; the '270 divisional application is set to issue as U.S. Patent No. 6,638,207 on October 28, 2003.

The instant continuation application is co-pending with the '270 divisional application and is being filed to pursue patentability of the subject matter of original claim 8, as well as additional new claims 31-33. Thus, original claims 1-29 of the '270 divisional application have been cancelled herein, new independent claim 30 is directed to subject matter covered by original claim 8, which was dependent on original claim 4 which, in turn, was dependent on original claim 1, and claims 31-33 are presented as new claims.

It is noted that the '270 divisional application was originally filed with informal diagrams. As such, Applicant has enclosed herewith a complete set of the formal diagrams, i.e., sheets 1-7, containing Figures 1a – 7d.

In addition, an Information Disclosure Statement, as well as a copy of each of the references listed therein, are enclosed herewith.

Applicant believes that the application is in condition for allowance, and a favorable action is respectfully requested. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for

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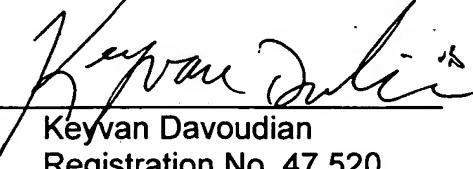
placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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